



Contact: Lauren Heesemann
[757-810-3314](tel:757-810-3314)
Vernon Smith
[301-713-7248](tel:301-713-7248)

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NOAA seeks input on Monitor National Marine Sanctuary draft management plan

NOAA today released a comprehensive draft management plan and environmental assessment for the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary for public review and comment. The plan, based on several years of scientific assessment and public input, will serve as a roadmap for addressing issues facing the sanctuary over the next five years.

The draft plan includes proposals to:

- enhance education and outreach;
- continue restoration and conservation of USS Monitor artifacts;
- consider possible expansion of the sanctuary's boundaries; and
- work with the state of North Carolina to strengthen coastal economies through maritime history and Civil War tourism.

"The USS *Monitor* and the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary belong to the American people," said David Alberg, sanctuary superintendent. "For this reason, we encourage and welcome comments regarding the management of this significant cultural resource and the environment in which she now rests."

The draft plan updates the original 1998 management plan under which the sanctuary currently operates. The draft plan describes the sanctuary's goals, core principles, regulations and boundaries, and guides future activities. It also outlines staffing and budget needs, and sets priorities and performance measures for resource protection, research and education programs.

Periodic management plan review is required by Congress for each of NOAA's 13 national marine sanctuaries and one marine monument to ensure they continue to conserve, protect and enhance their nationally significant living and cultural resources while allowing compatible commercial and recreational activities.

All comments must be received by June 22. Written comments should be sent by mail to Shannon Ricles, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, VA, 23606; by email to monitor@noaa.gov; or by fax to [757-591-7353](tel:757-591-7353).

Comments may also be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> by clicking the "submit a comment" icon, then enter NOAA-NOS-2012-0076 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a Comment" icon on the right of that line.

Public can also attend meetings to learn more and submit comments in person. Meetings will be held at the following locations and times:

- April 30, 6:30 p.m., North Carolina Museum of History, 5 E. Edenton St., Raleigh, N.C.
- May 1, 6:30 p.m., North Carolina Maritime Museum, 204 E. Moore St., Southport, N.C.
- May 2, 6:30 p.m., North Carolina Maritime Museum, 315 Front Street, Beaufort, N.C.
- May 3, 6:30 p.m., Jennette's Pier, 7223 South Virginia Trail, Milepost 16.5, Nags Head, N.C.
- May 4, 2:00 p.m., The Mariners' Museum, 100 Museum Drive, Newport News, Va.

Copies of the draft management plan and environmental assessment can be obtained at Monitor National Marine Sanctuary office in Newport News, or by calling [757-591-7328](tel:757-591-7328). The plan may also be downloaded from the sanctuary's web site at <http://monitor.noaa.gov>.

Managed by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, Monitor National Marine Sanctuary was designated in 1975 to protect the wreck of the famed Civil War ironclad *USS Monitor*, which sank during a storm 16 miles off Cape Hatteras, N.C. in 1862.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).